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FIELD WORKS  
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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS OF THE STONE AGE SETTLEMENT SITE AND RUIN OF THE STONE CIST GRAVE OF THE EARLY METAL AGE IN KASEKÜLA

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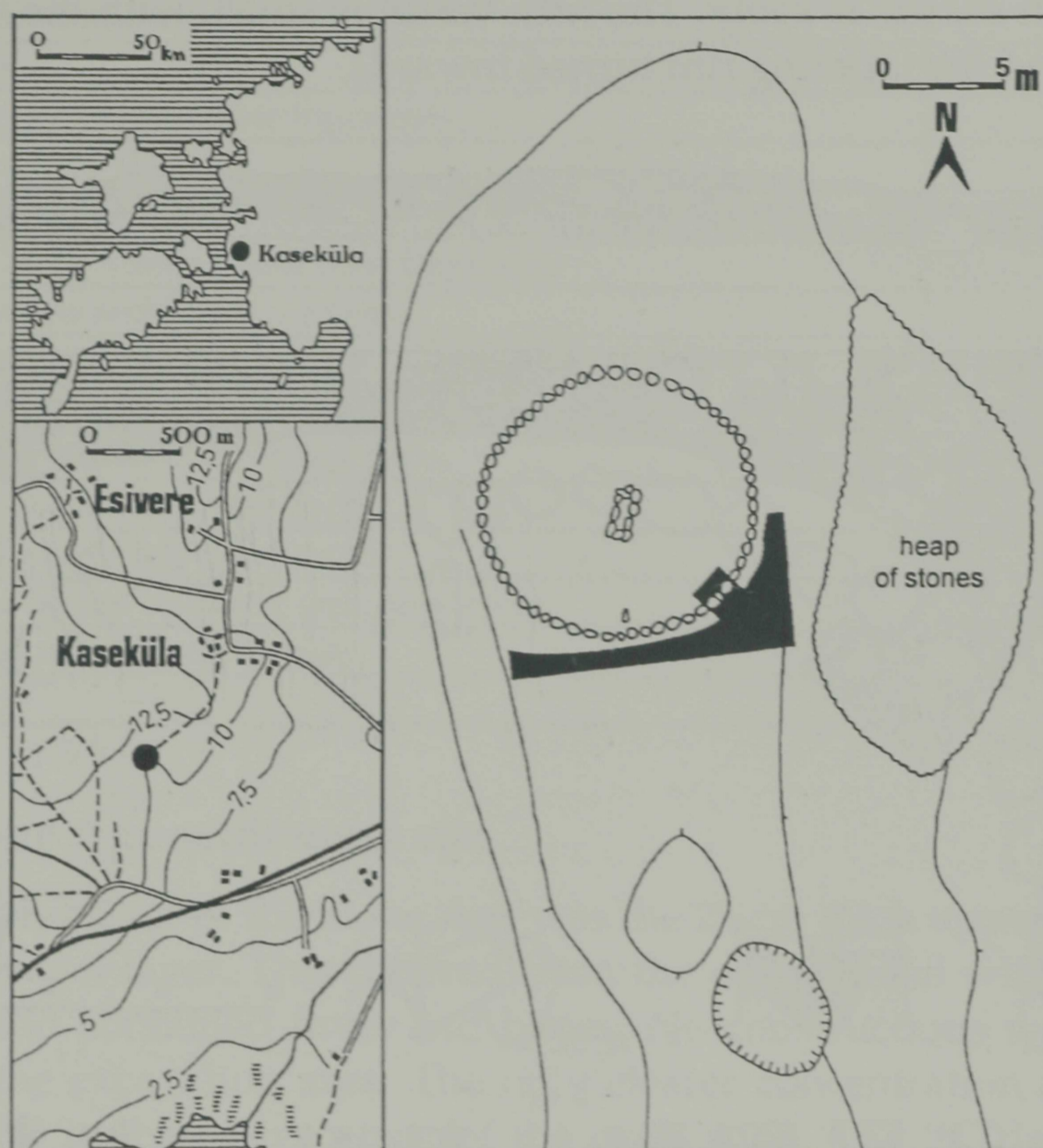
The stone graves and the Stone Age settlement site of Kaseküla are located in Läänemaa, about 0.5 km to the southwest from the heart of Kaseküla village (Fig. 1). The seven stone graves, located in a single group, were discovered by Vello Lõugas in 1971 (Mandel 1993). In 1973, Mati Mandel excavated the northernmost one, which appeared to be a stone cist grave with one circular wall. Below and around the grave, the cultural layer of a settlement site of an earlier date was discovered (Mandel 1973; 1975, 74).

New excavations on the monuments of Kaseküla took place in 1997. These were financed by the Estonian Science Foundation (grant no 2254), Estonian Fund for Furthering Culture and the Fishing Industry of Pärnu. An excavation of 22 m<sup>2</sup> was dug to the south of the grave investigated in 1973, between two graves (Fig. 1). A part of the ruin between the two graves was cleared and the cultural layer of the Stone Age settlement site under it excavated. The soil was screened, mesh of the screen measured 2–5 mm.

## Ruin of the graves

The ruin consisted of granite and limestones with the diameter 5–20 cm, and the soil between the stones, which was blackish-brown and rich in organic or heavily sodded. The thickness of the cultural layer of the grave was 40–55 cm. In the excavation the stones of the ruin were preserved in four layers at the most. Under the ruin outside of the circular wall, an oval pit was discovered, 25 cm deep, measuring 1.4x0.85 m, dug in the original soil and filled with stones. The cultural layer in it bore

heavy burning traces – granite stones were swelled and crumbling, and limestones were red-coloured or even calcified. Relying upon the potsherds found there, this entrenchment ought to belong to the Metal Age and might be related to the burial rites.



*Fig. 1. The location map of archaeological monuments in Kaseküla and the excavation of 1997.*

In the western part of the excavation, three separately situated fragments of human skull(s) were found. Most of the found potsherds were very small. Still, fragments of five vessels could be distinguished (Fig. 2). The fragments of the first vessel with smoothed surfaces were found in the western part of the excavation. This was a vessel with the walls about 1 cm thick and the tapering rim turned inwards. The clay contains stone rubble. The fragments of the second vessel were located in the same western part of the excavation. The walls of this vessel were 0.8–1.0 cm thick, its surfaces were similarly smoothed, but it had been bigger than the first one. The fragments of the third vessel were found in the eastern part of the excavation. This had been smaller than the others, and the walls, about 0.6–0.7 cm thick, were decorated with horizontal

lines of elongated notches. The two bigger sherds of the fourth vessel were found in the above-mentioned entrenchment. The vessel has been rather big, with semierect walls and the orifice turned slightly inwards. The clay contains stone rubble. Unlike the other vessels, this one has been smoothed on the outside and striated on the inside. The inner surface of both sherds is sooty. The fifth vessel is small, with the walls 0.4 cm thick and the tapering rim turned inwards.

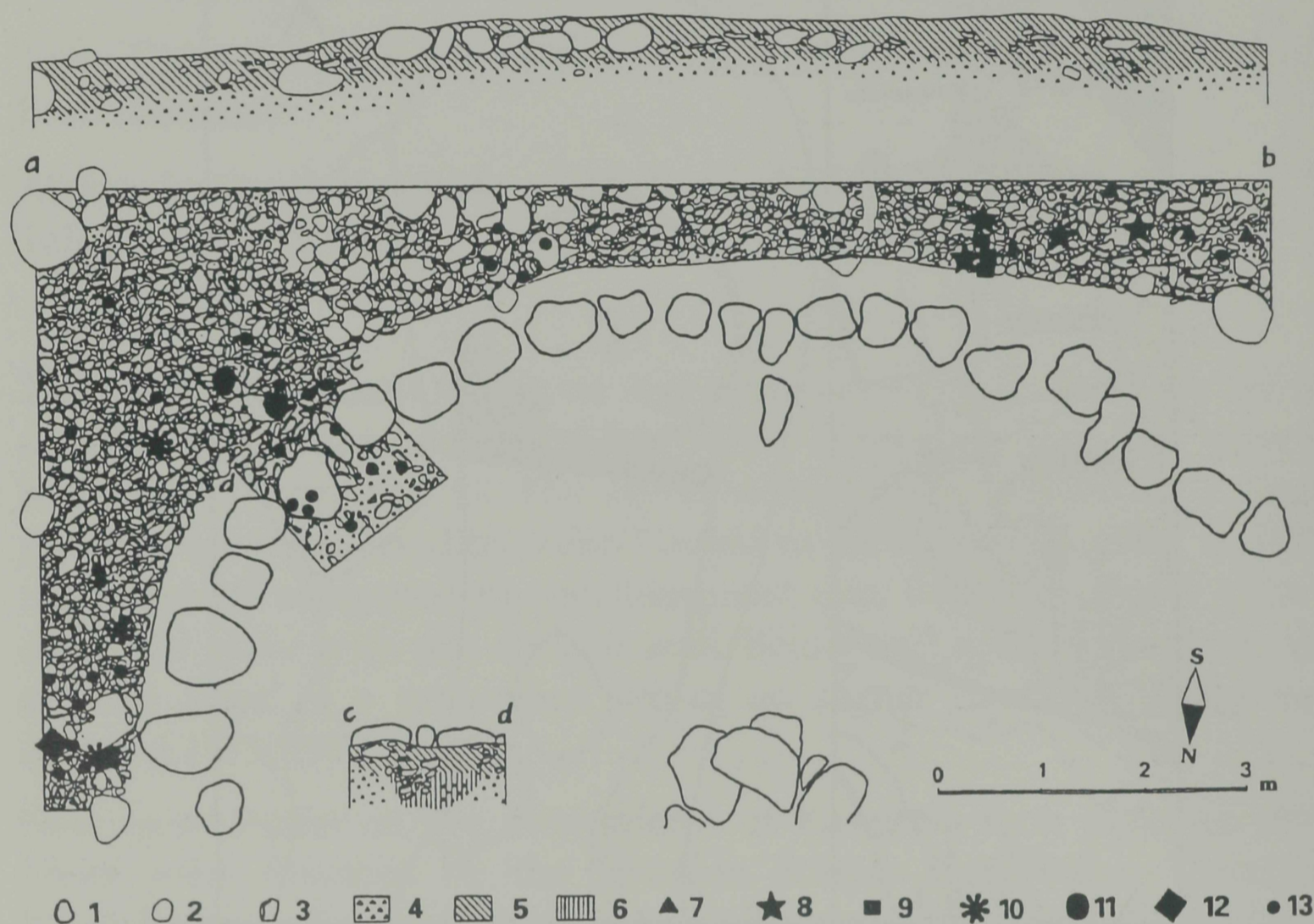


Fig. 2. General plan of the excavation. 1 – stone of the grave construction of the stone cist grave, 2 – granite stone, 3 – limestone, 4 – pebbly gravel, 5 – dark brown soil rich in organic material, 6 – black humus soil, 7 – fragment of a human skull, 8–13 – pottery of the Metal Age (8 – fragment of the vessel no 1; 9 – fragment of the vessel no 2; 10 – fragment of the vessel no 3; 11 – fragment of the vessel no 4; 12 – fragment of the vessel no 5; 13 – indeterminate potsherd).

The pottery is not easily datable. The bronze razor found from the cist of the grave, excavated by M. Mandel, dates the grave to the Late Bronze Age (Lang 1996, 297). The head of the shepherd's crook pin and the pottery found from the ruin were dated by Mandel to the Pre-Roman Iron Age (Mandel 1975, 74, Fig. 2). The excavations of 1997 did not enable to specify these dates, as the found pottery may be contemporaneous either with the burial in the cist or the later secondary burials.

**Table 1.** *Finds from the stone grave and the Neolithic settlement site of Kaseküla.*

Type of the find	1973	1997
Pottery of the Metal Age	170	83
Bronze objects	2	–
Fragments of iron artefacts	2	–
Iron slags	6	–
Grinding-stones and their fragments	3	–
Corded pottery (?)	3	7
Late Comb Ware	–	160
Polished stone artefacts and their fragments	2	2
Bone artefacts and their fragments	–	4
Processed bone fragments	1	5
Amber	2	–
Small tools of quartz and other rocks	–	18
Flakes of quartz and other rocks	–	41
Nuclei of quartz and other rocks	–	5
Chips and lumps of quartz and other rocks	1	578
Fragments of polishing stones	–	4
Total	192	907

### The Stone Age settlement site

The cultural layer of the Stone Age was the 25 cm thick upper part of the pebbly gravel layer. This differed from the original soil with its darker colour, and contained finds and bones. No constructions were discovered in the excavation area. The only clearer concentration of charcoal was found in the eastern part of the excavation. The  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating of the sample gathered there gave the result  $510 \pm 60$  years (Ta-2635), so it does not belong to the Stone Age.

An amount of 160 potsherds is related to the cultural layer of the settlement site (finds AM 807:1–453). Relying on their shape we may presume that the vessels have been rather capacious and straight-walled. Rim and bottom fragments were not found. Thickness of the wall could be measured on 38 sherds. It varied from 9 to 14 mm (average 10,7 mm). Most of the sherds (25) are 10–11 mm thick. The potsherds are rather badly preserved and tend to crumble. The vessels have mostly been made of clay mixed with limestone (this was the composition of 133 sherds). In some cases, granite rubble has also been added. 24 fragments (14. 4%) are very porous and, relying upon the traces, have contained some plant admixture. A few fragments contain only granite rubble in the admixture. Limestone has not been discovered before in the composition of Estonian Stone Age pottery. It is quite rare also in later pottery.

Limestone admixture has been discovered, for instance, in the pottery from the Poanse tarand-grave in West Estonia (Mandel 1978, 79).

It was possible to study the outer surface of 95 and the inner surface of 68 potsherds. The surfaces are either striated (65. 3% of the outer and 35. 5% of the inner surfaces) or smoothed (34. 7% of the outer and 64. 7% of the inner surfaces). 38 sherds were ornamented (23. 8% of the total). The only decorative elements are comb impressions. They are mostly long and comparatively wide. On one vessel the impressions are diagonal in opposite directions or crossing, located in zones (Fig. 3). The ornamen-

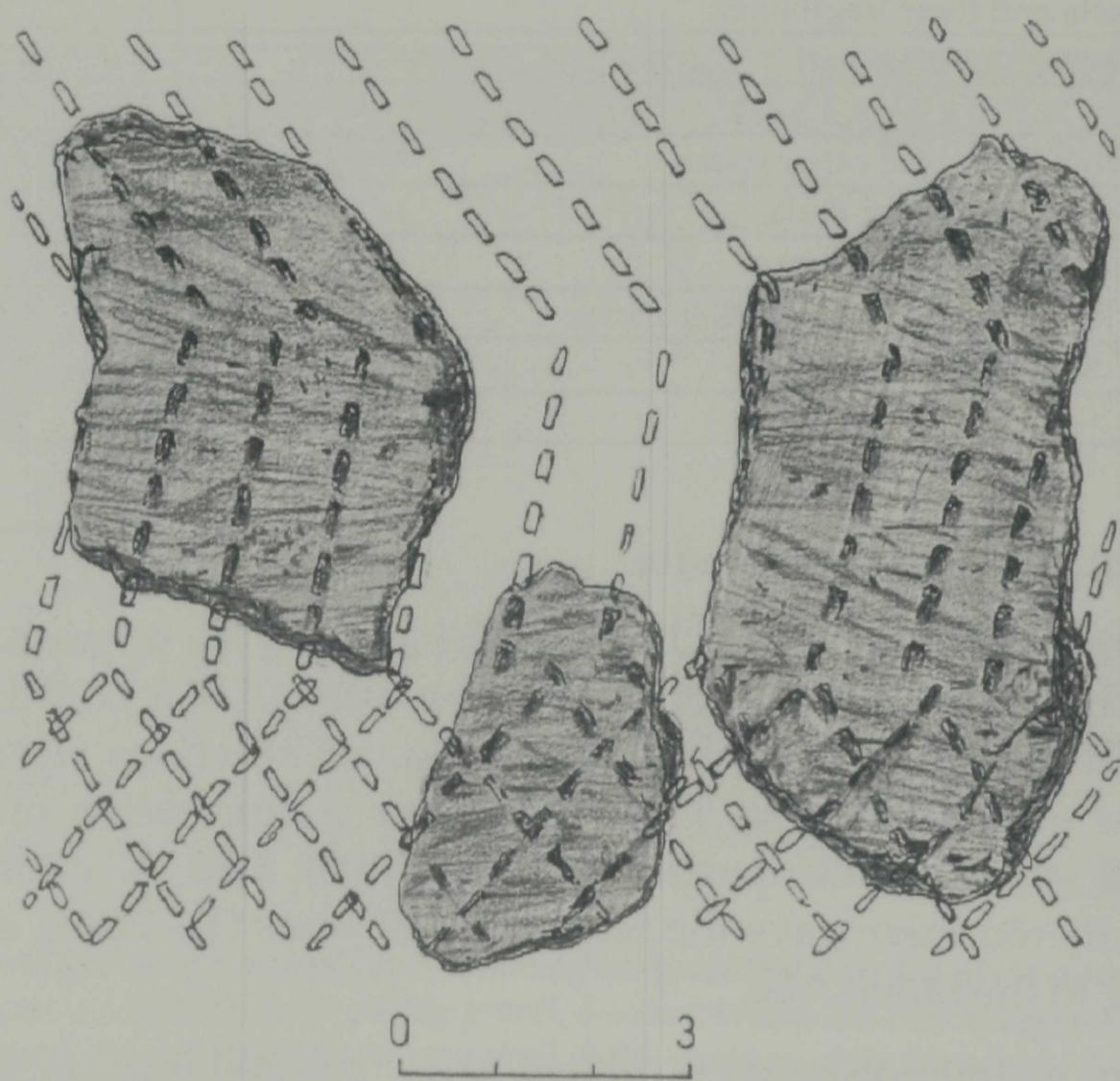


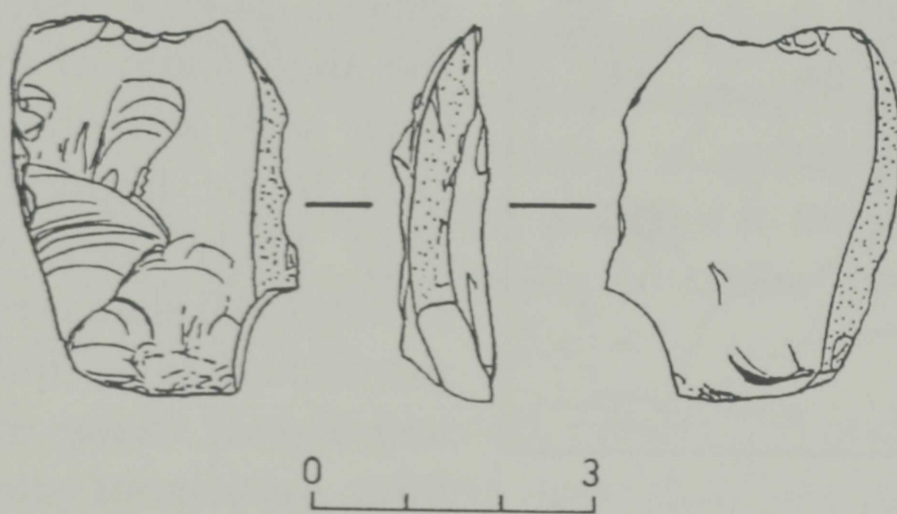
Fig. 3. Geometric ornamentation of comb impressions on the late comb ware of Kaseküla (AM 807:338, 316, 340).

tation, surface finishing, thickness of the walls and the use of organic admixture in the composition of clay relate the pottery of Kaseküla to the Late Comb Ware. Analogous comb impressions, sometimes forming rather complicated geometric ornaments, are typical of Late Comb Ware. Pottery from Kudruküla and Väiküla (Kriiska 1995, 92) on the lower reaches of the Narva River offers good parallels, and so do the finds from Tamula in South-East Estonia (Jaanits 1984, 190–191).

The type of seven of the found potsherds is indeterminate. These fragments are 5–8 mm thick, with smoothed or striated surfaces, containing stone rubble in the admixture. One fragment is decorated with horizontal rows of small oblong grooves. The presumable impressions of hair on the surfaces remind of corded pottery (see e. g. Kriiska 1996a, 416).

In 1997, 648 stone finds were gathered, 526 (81.2 %) of them are quartz, 72 (11.1 %) flint, 10 (1.5 %) quartzite, 3 (0.5 %) Baltic red porphyry and 37 (5.7 %) of other rocks, mostly sandstones. The majority of the finds were flakes, the number of blades is 41. 36 of them were of quartz (6.8 % of quartz and quartzite finds). Quartz blades are 0.9–3.8 cm long (55.6 % are less than 2 cm long), 0.3–1.6 cm wide (66.7 % are less than 1 cm wide) and predominantly with one ridge (27 blades) or without ridge (8 blades). Four blades are of flint (5.5 % of flint finds). They are 1.2–2.2 cm long and 0.6–1.0 cm wide. One blade is of some other rock. Only four quartz and one flint specimen could be regarded as cores. These are mainly small and with one striking platform. The defects of surface structure of quartz cores indicate the application of bipolar technique – the lump of raw material has been processed on a stone base with a stone tool.

18 of the objects (2.8 % of stone finds) bear traces of secondary processing. Most of them are scrapers (77.8 %). 10 of the 14 specimens are of quartz, one of flint (Fig. 4), one of quartzite and two of other rocks. All these are made of flakes and are triangular (5), trapezoid (5), segmental (1), polygonal (1) or irregular (2). The greater part of them are end scrapers, side scrapers, as well as side-and-end scrapers are less numerous. One-bladed scrapers prevail while three-bladed ones occur only exceptionally. The blade may be straight (8), convex (5), concave (2) or wavy (1).



*Fig. 4. Flint scraper (AM 807:225).*

Three burins were found (16.7 % of the objects of secondary processing), two of them made of flint and one of quartz. They are made of flakes and are triangular, round or irregular by shape. Two of them are angle burins and one is a dihedral burin. A small triangular quartz knife made of flake was also found.

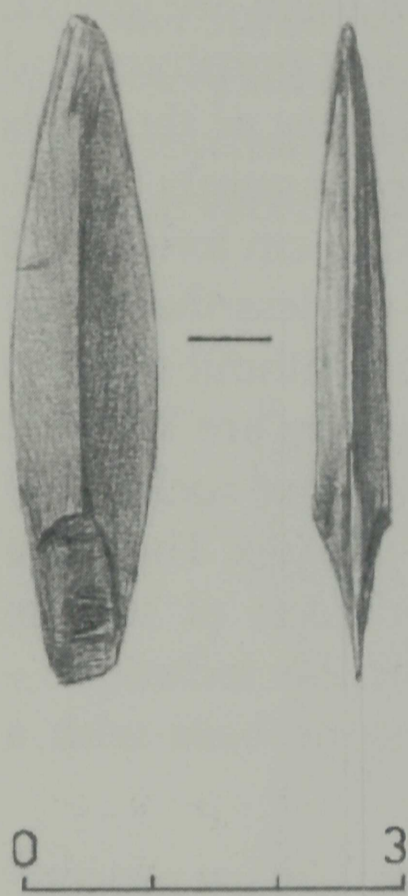


Fig. 5. Slate arrowhead (AM 807:398).

Four pieces of sandstone can be regarded as fragments of polishing stones. Only one indeterminate fragment and an arrowhead of slate, 5.2 cm long (Fig. 5) represented polished stone objects. Slate arrowheads are comparatively rare finds in Estonia as well as in Latvia (Fig. 6). In Estonia, besides Kaseküla one whole slate arrowhead has been found from Tamula (Jaanits et al 1982, 79) and fragments from Loona (Jaanits et al 1982, 86) and Lemmetsa. In Latvia, three whole arrowheads have been found from Abora, one from Rinnukalns (ЯНИТС 1959, 193) and a fragment from Eini (Ilze Loze to A. Kriiska, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> 1998). The carefully polished arrowheads are leaf-shaped, with a ridge on both sides and a lozenge cross-section. The tangs of the arrowheads have been polished thinner on both sides. All these arrowheads belong to the pyheensilta, or nyelv type, spread in Finland, Norway (Edgren 1984, 87) and the Kola Peninsula (Гурина 1973, 47). In Finland this type, determined by C. F. Meinander (Meinander 1939, 33–36) is related to the Pyheensilta culture, dated to ca 2900(?)–2400 BC (Salo 1997, 8–9). In the areas south of the Gulf of Finland, such arrowheads are considered to be imported goods, and most likely they originate from Finland. All slate arrowheads of the mentioned type, found in Estonia and Latvia, come from Late Neolithic settlement sites bearing the traits of the Late Comb Ware culture and dated by 14C method (Stuiver & Pearson 1993; Pearson &

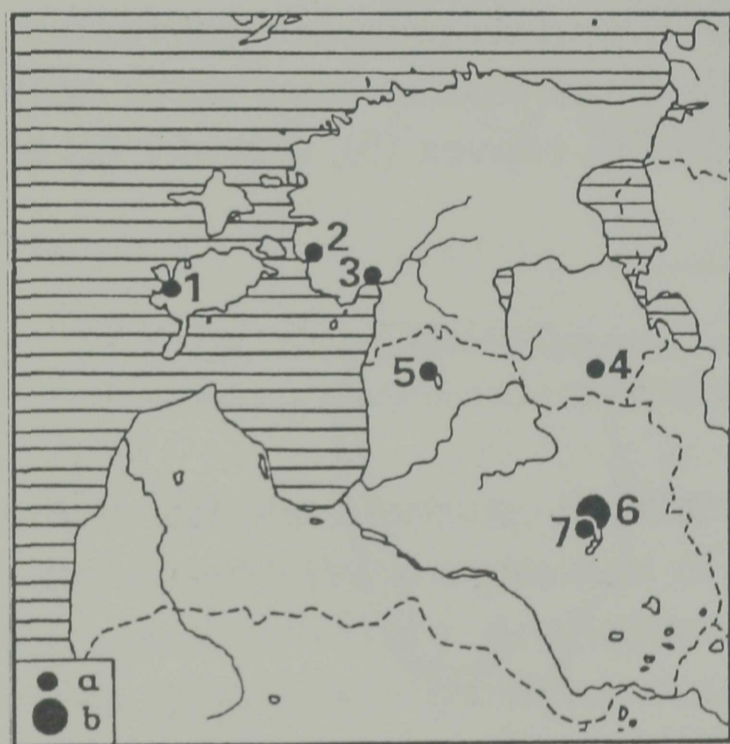


Fig. 6. Slate arrowheads from Estonia and Latvia (a – 1 specimen, b – 3 specimens). 1 – Loona, 2 – Kaseküla, 3 – Lemmetsa, 4 – Tamula, 5 – Rinnukalns, 6 – Abora, 7 – Eini.

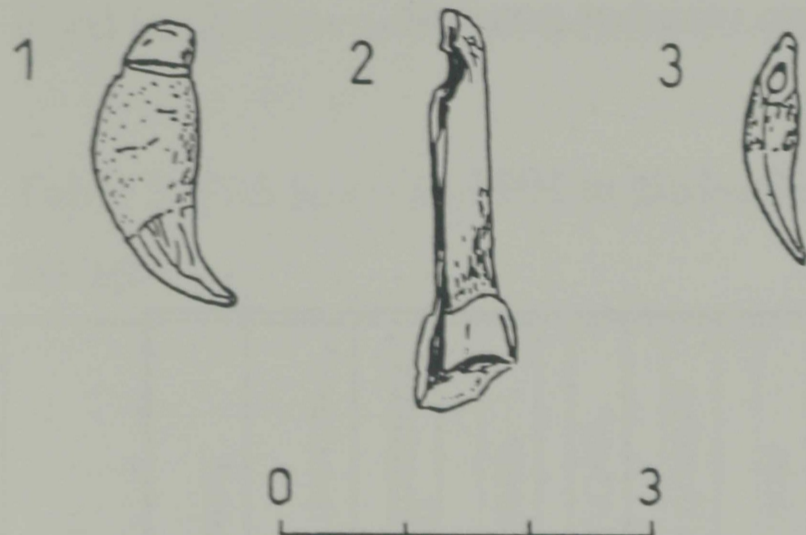


Fig. 7. Tooth pendants (AM 807:32, 198, 452).

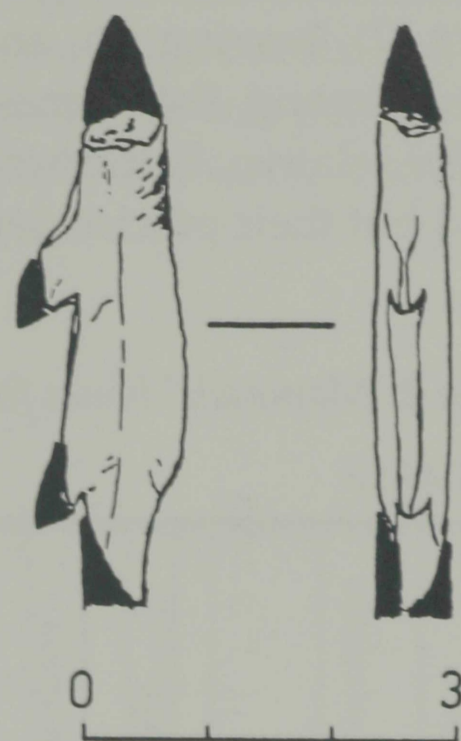


Fig. 8. Fragment of a fishing spear or a harpoon (AM 807:66).

Stuiver 1993) to the period 3280...1520 BC (Ильвес et al 1974, 177; Lõugas et al 1996, table III).

Of bone artefacts, three tooth pendants, one fragment of a harpoon or fishing spear and some processed bone fragments. Two of the tooth pendants are fangs and one is molar. One of them has a cut groove and two have bored holes in the root part (Fig. 7). The fragment of a fishing spear or harpoon has a tapering upper part and an oval cross-section, in the middle part it is widening and polished thinner on both sides, the cross-section becoming almost rhomboid, at the other end the fragment is tapering, too.

### Animal bones.

The rich and varied osteological material consists of burnt and unburnt animal bones. Little fish bones are remarkably numerous. Of the determined species, five bone fragments belong to marbled seal, one to Greenlandic seal, three to elk, two to fox and two to mountain hare. Of domestic animals, seven fragments belong to cattle, three to goat or sheep, two to pig and five to dog.

Among fish bones, plaice (314 fragments), perch (275) and codfish (157) prevailed. Some of plaice bones, relying upon their size, seem to belong to halibut, which prefers more brackish water than the present Baltic Sea and occurs only in the southern parts of the sea. Unfortunately, size is a subjective criterion and thus the precise determination of the species is

impossible. Eel (46 fragments), pike (42), lavaret (20), pike perch (11), turbot (7), herring (2), and also ide (6) and roach (3) were also represented among fish bones. The herring bones probably belong to its smaller relative, Baltic herring. Some fragments of birds' bones were also found but their precise determination was not possible.

**Table 2.** *Mammals' bones found from Kasekiila in 1997*

MAMMALS

	Phocidae	Pusa hispida	Pagophilus gro- enlandicus	Vulpes vulpes	Alces alces	Lepus timidus	Capra/Ovis*	Bos taurus*	Sus domesticus*	Canis familiaris*	Rodentia*
Cranium											1
Os temporale			1								
Maxillare						1					1
Mandibula				1							8
Dentes	1	4		1	3	1	3	6	2	2	12
Vertebrae											1
Costae	3										
Humerus										1	5
Ulna										1	4
Radius	1	1								1	
Os carpale	3							1			
Os coxae	1										4
Femur											2
Os cruris	1										3
Metatarsus	3										
Metacarpus	1										
Phalanx	14										
Total	28	5	1	2	3	2	3	7	2	5	41

\*does not derive  
from Stone Age

All bones of domestic animals, except at least one fragment of a dog bone, and also a part of the bones of wild animals and fish come from the grave. Half of the bones of the domestic animals were gathered from the first two layers of stones of the ruin of the grave. The 41 bones of rodents are probably also connected with these. From an entrenchment probably connected with the grave, bones of cattle and sheep or goat, as well as of seal and fish, were obtained. The latter may have fallen there

by chance, by the mixing of the soil layers, while the entrenchment became filled. Among the neolithic material marine fauna, seals and fish, prevail, which is characteristic of coastal settlements of that period. Both marine fish and fresh water fish are represented, the latter may have lived in shallow waters near the coast.

**Table 3.** *Fish bones found from Kasekiila in 1997*

PISCES

	Clupea harengus	Coregonus lavaretus	Esox lucius	Anguilla anguilla	Rutilus rutilus	Leuciscus idus	Cyprinidae	Gadus morhua	Stizostedion lucioperca	Perca fluviatilis	Scophthalmus maximus	Pleuronectes flesus
Vertebrae	2	20	26	46	2	5	12	132	11	240	7	312
Dentale			2		1		3	1		5		
Articulare			2					1		6		1
Quadratum										2		1
Ossa pharyng.							1					
Dentes			5									
Ectopterygoideum			1									
Palatinum			2									
Maxillare										2		
Praemaxillare								6		4		
Basioccipitale								1		1		
Vomer								1				
Parasphenoideum							1	1				
Operculare										1		
Praeoperculare										1		
Urohyale												
Keratohyale			1									
Branchiostegalia								4				
Posttemporale								6		4		
Supracleithrale								4		7		
Cleithrum			3									
Scapula						1						
Squamae										2		
Total	2	20	42	46	3	6	17	157	11	275	7	314

## Conclusions

The thickness and intensity of the Stone Age cultural layer, as well as the small number of finds from the area excavated in 1973, indicate that then the Stone Age cultural layer was not excavated except for the 10 cm thick topmost part. The cultural determination and dating of the Kaseküla settlement site – Late Corded Ware culture and the beginning of the Bronze Age (Mandel 1975, 75; Jaanits *et al.* 1982, 106) – were not confirmed by the new investigations in 1997. The find complex dates the settlement layer to the Late Neolithic and connects it with the Late Comb Ware culture. Odd potsherds presumably belong to the corded ware, too. Potsherds of corded ware occur in greater or smaller numbers in several Estonian Late Comb Ware settlements, like Akali, Jägala, Kullamägi, Lemmetsa, Tamula and Villa (Jaanits 1966, 64). The occurrence of potsherds of corded ware can be explained by two different reasons: 1) people of the Corded Ware culture have lived or acted there at some time, or 2) pottery may have drifted between communities by contacts and trade.

The previous interpretations of analyses of animal bones by K. Paaver (Jaanits 1992, 52–53; Kriiska 1996b, 5) must also be revised. Such association of animal bones indicates the mingling of bones from the grave and the Stone Age settlement, thus conclusions cannot be driven, relying upon them, about the economy of the settlement preceding the grave. Leaving aside dogs' bones, none of the bones of domestic animals found in 1997 can be definitely connected with the cultural layer of the Neolithic settlement. Animal bones indicate that the settlement of Kaseküla has been inhabited by a community with gathering economy, strongly oriented towards the sea.

## Acknowledgements

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## ARHEOLOOGILISED KAEVAMISED KASEKÜLA KIVIAJA ASULAKOHAL JA VARASE MAETALLIAJA KIVIKIRSTKALME ÄÄREVAREL

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Kaseküla kivikalmed ja kiviaja asulakoht asuvad Läänemaal Kasekülas, küla tuumikust u. 0,5 km edelas (joon. 1). Ühes rühmas paiknevad seitse kivikalmet leidis siin 1971. aastal Vello Lõugas. 1973. aastal kaevas Mati Mandel nendest kalmetest läbi kõige põhjapoolsema, mis osutus ühe ringmüüri kivist kalmeks. Kalme alt ja lähiümbrusest leiti varasema asulakoha kultuurkiht, mis tookord arvati kuuluvat hilisesse nöörikeramika kultuuri ja dateeriti pronksiaja algusesse. Uued kaevamised Kaseküla muististerühmas toimusid 1997. aastal.

22 m<sup>2</sup> suurune kaevand rajati 1973. aastal uuritud kalmest lõuna poole, kahe kalme vahele (joon. 1). Puhastati välja osa kalmetevahelisest äärevarest ja kaevati läbi selle all asuv kiviaegse asulakoha kultuurkiht. Äärevare koosnes kõige rohkem neljast kivihihist ja orgaanikarikkast mullast. Sellest sügavamal, kalme ringmüürist väljapoole jääval alal, avastati u. 25 cm looduslikku pinda kaevatud lohk. 1,4 x 0,85 m läbimõõduga lohus oli tugevasti põlenud kive ja sütt. Samast leitud keramika järgi otsustades on see metalliaegne sissekaeve, mis võib olla seotud matmisrituaaliga. Kaevandist leiti inimese kolju fragmente ja savinõukilde. Killud pärinevad vähemalt viiest, erineva suuruse, kuju ja pinnatötlusega nõust (joon. 2). Ühe väiksema nõu pind oli ornamenditud horisontaalsetes ridades paiknenud piklike täketega; teisel oli välispind silutud ning sisepind riibitud. Kogutud keramika on raskesti dateeritav. M. Mandeli kaevatud kivist kalme kirstust leitud pronksist habemenuga pärineb nooremast pronksiajast. Äärevarest leitud karasekeppnõela pea ja keramika dateeris Mandel eelrooma rauaajaga. 1997. aasta kaevamised ei võimaldanud nendes dateeringutes teha olulisi täpsustusi, kuna leitud savinõukillud võivad pärineda nii kirstu matmise kui ka hiljem sooritatud järelmatuste ajast.

Kiviaja asula kultuurkiht oli kuni 25 cm paksune. See eristus looduslikust pinnasest tumedama värvusega ning sisaldas leide ja luid. Mingeid kiviaegseid kinnisobjekte kaevandialt ei avastatud. Asula kultuurkihiga seostus ligi paarsada väikest savinõukildu. Killud olid halvasti säilinud ja murenesid kergesti. Nende uurimine näitas, et anumad valmistati lubjakiviga segatud savist. Vaid mõnel juhul oli lisatud ka graniidipurdu. Varem pole Eesti kiviaja keramikas lubjakivi lisamist savimassile täheldatud. Ka hilisemate savinõude puhul on see väga harv nähtus. Kaseküla kiviaja keramika ornament (joon. 3), pinnatötlus, seinapaksus ja orgaanilise lisandi kasutamine vormimis-massis, seovad selle hilise kammkeramikaga, millel on kõige lähemad vasted näit. Narva jõe alamjooksu alalt Kudrukülas ja Väikülas, samuti Kagu-Eestis Tamulas.

1997. aasta kaevamistel koguti Kasekülast veel 648 kivileidu, millest 526 olid kvartsist, 72 tulekivist, 10 kvartsiidist, 3 Läänemere punasest kvartsporfüürist ja 37 teistest kivimitest, peamiselt liivakividest. Enamus kivileidudest olid killud. Teisese tööt-lusega esemeid oli 18 ja suurima rühma (kokku 14) moodustasid neist kõõvitsad (vt. joon. 4). Uuritsaid saadi 3, s. h. kaks tulekivist. Leiti ka üks väikene killust valmistatud kolmnurkse kujuga kvartsnuga. Lihvitud kiviesemetest saadi üks kiltkivist nooleots (joon. 5). Luuesemetest leiti 3 hammasripatsit, üks harpuuni- või ahinguots ja mõned töödeldud luukillud. Ühel hammasripatsil on juureossa sisse lõigatud soon ja kahele puuritud auk (joon. 7).

Kogutud osteoloogiline aines, mis koosneb nii põlenud kui põletamata loomaluudest, on arvukas ja mitmekesine. See sisaldab iseäranis palju väikesi kalaluid. Kaladest domineeris lest, ahven ja tursk. Esines aga ka angerjat, haugi, siiga, koha, kammeljat, heeringat, säinast ja särge (vt. tabel 3). Kõik kodu- ja osa metslooma luudest saadi kalmekihist. Äärevare alt avastatud süvendist saadud luud kuulusid veisele, lambale või kitsele ning hülgele. Samas oli ka kalaluid. Neoliitilise ainese hulgas domineerivad hülged ja kalad.

1997. aasta Kaseküla kaevamised näitasid, et sinne kiviajaast pärinev asulakiht tuleks dateerida hilisneoliitikumi ning siduda hilise kammkeraamika kultuuriga. Osteoloogilise leiumaterjali analüüs lubab väita, et Kasekülas on elanud tugevasti merele orienteeritud püügimajandusega tegelev kogukond.